

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CI, PGOV, SHUM
SUBJECT: LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE: MEDIA COUNTER-ATTACK CONTINUES

REF: SANTIAGO 5878 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: WITH NO NEW DEVELOPMENTS TO REPORT, THE MEDIA
IS DEVOTING ITS ENERGIES TO EDITORIAL COMMENT. ONLY "EL MERCURIO"
OVER THE WEEKEND HAD CONSTRUCTIVE THOUGHTS; THE OTHER NEWSPAPERS
GO DOWN RAPIDLY FROM THERE. END SUMMARY.

2. "EL MERCUIRO." DIRECTOR ARTURO FONTAINE DEVOTED HIS "LA
SEMANA POLITICA," AUGUST 6, TO THE LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE.
ACCORDING TO FONTAINE THE LESSON OF THE CASE IS THAT
NEVER AGAIN -- NOT EVEN FOR REASONS OF NATIONAL SECURITY --
CAN IMPORTANT MATTERS OF STATE BE SEPARATED FROM CITIZEN CONTROL.
HE MOVES FROM THIS REVELATION TO THE ARGUMENT THAT NOW IS THE TIME
FOR ALL THOSE CIVILIANS WHO SUPPORT THIS REGIME

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TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS. MERCURIO ALSO CARRIED,
AUGUST 6, A LONG ANALYSIS OF US/CHILEAN JUDICIAL PROCEDURES RELATED
TO THE LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE AND THE FORTHCOMING EXTRADITION
REQUESTS (BEING REPORTED SEPTEL).

3. "LA TERCERA." THE EDITORIAL OF AUGUST 7 TAKES OFF FROM
PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S MEETING LAST FRIDAY WITH RETIRES

MILITARY OFFICERS. PINOCHET WARNED THE OFFICERS NOT TO BE DECEIVED BY THE EFFORTS OF INTERESTED GROUPS WHO MISUSE THE LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE TO UNDERMINE THE GOVERNMENT. AMONG THOSE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED GROUPS THE EDITORIAL LISTS IN ORDER: ALL THE OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON WHO HAVE MADE INTENTIONALLY AMBIGUOUS STATEMENTS, ALL OTHERS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE CHILE WHO CARRY ON A CAMPAIGN TO CONFUSE THE PURELY JUDICIAL WITH A POLITICAL SITUATION, THOSE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WHO VOTED TO CUT OFF THE ARMS PIPELINE BECAUSE OF THE CASE, AND, FINALLY, THOSE MEDIA ORGANS ABROAD WHO SPECULATE ON AND IMAGINE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE PRESENT SITUATION.

4. ARCH-REACTIONARY PABLO RODRIGUEZ DEVOTES HIS COLUMN TODAY TO THE CASE, ARGUING ESSENTIALLY THAT THE USG IS GUIDED ENTIRELY BY POLITICAL MOTIVES. HE ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH A CIA CONNECTION THROUGH THE BACKDOOR, NOTING (CORRECTLY BUT MEANINGLESSLY) THAT NOBODY HAS BEEN ABLE SO FAR TO PROVE THAT TOWNLEY WAS NOT A CIA AGENT, AND HE SAYS IT IS VERY HARD TO BELIEVE THAT, IN A CONSPIRACY INVOLVING CUBANS WITH CLOSE TIES TO THE CIA, THE USG WAS EITHER NOT AWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING OR COULD NOT HAVE FOUND OUT VERY QUICKLY AFTER THE FACT. HE SAYS THAT SOONER OR LATER THE US WILL FIND A PRETEXT FOR BREAKING RELATIONS, TAKING MOST OF THE WESTERN NATIONS WITH IT. THUS, ACCORDING TO RODRIGUEZ, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD FORGET ABOUT TRYING TO MOLLIFY ITS EXTERNAL CRITICS AND GET ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF REMAKING CHILE ALONG AUTHORITARIAN (IF NOT WORSE) LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LINES.

5. "LA SEGUNDA." THE SEGUNDA EDITORIAL OF AUGUST 5 SAYS THAT NATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION IS CONVINCED THAT THERE IS NO LINK BETWEEN THE HIGHEST AUTHORITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE POSSIBLE EXCESSES OF DINA, INCLUDING THE ASSASSINATION OF LETELIER. FOR "LA SEGUNDA" IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE PERSON WHO PLACED THE BOMB UNDER THE CAR WAS AN AMERICAN CITIZEN AND THAT THE FINGER ON THE BUTTON WAS CUBAN. AND, ADDS SEGUNDA, IT IS CURIOUS THAT THE FIRST OF THESE (TOWNLEY) IS NOT EVEN NAMED IN THE FORMAL INDICTMENTS OF AUGUST 1. THE PARTICIPATION OF CHILEANS IN THE CASE ACCORDING TO "LA SEGUNDA" IS OF A DIFFERENT ORDER OF IMPORTANCE (PRESUMABLY LESS).

6. EL CRONISTA." EDITOR SILVA PINTO HAS A PARTICULARLY NASTY PIECE AUGUST 7 STARTING OFF WITH THE ASSERTION THAT UNITED STATES HISTORY IS MARKED BY VIOLENCE AND INJUSTICE, ALONG WITH GREATMENSS. SHE PROCEEDS TO GIVE A PREDICTABLY DISTORTED ACCOUNT OF US HISTORY FROM THE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR TO VIET NAM. SHE ARGUES THAT THE UNITED STATES, WHILE ATTAINING MATERIAL WEALTH AND POWER, HAS BEEN FRUSTRATED BY ITS INABILITY TO PROVIDE MORAL LEADERSHIP. IT IS LIKE A FRUIT THAT HAS BEGUN

TO ROT WITHOUT EVER BECOMING MATURE.

7. COMMENT: WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE AS YET THAT THE GOC IS GIVING
CLEAR AND FIRM GUIDANCE TO THE MEDIA ON HOW TO RESPOND TO THE
LETELIER/MOFFITT CASE. EDITORIAL COMMENT TO DATE WAS PREDICTABLE.
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